

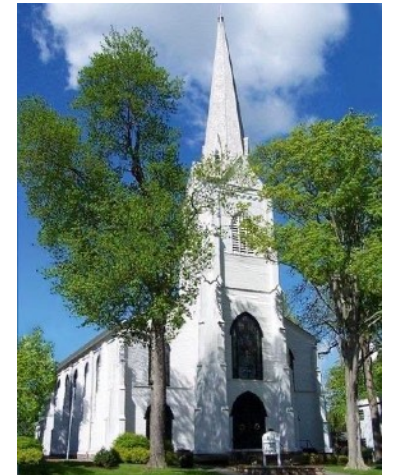
**First Presbyterian
Church
298 Main Street**

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
298 MAIN STREET
HACKETTSTOWN, NJ 07840
REV. ERIN HAYES-COOK
OFFICE: 908-852-4011
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Church website,
<http://www.fpchackettstown.org>
Editor: MaryAnn Simmons
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**OCTOBER
2025**



*Light
from the*



Steeple

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
HACKETTSTOWN, NJ
CHURCH OFFICE: (908) 852-4011**

Pastor: Rev. Erin Hayes-Cook
Choir Director/Organist: Lorinda Ravo
Treasurer: Al Ravo
Financial Secretary: Deborah Gulick-Shepherd
Head Usher: Kim Newton
Church Secretary: Pattie Huff

2025 SESSION

Class of 2025	Class of 2026	Class of 2027
Donna Erickson	Bill Cors	Michele Cameron
Diane Hull	Geof Gohlich	Pete Miller
Ray Sookhoo	Sharon Heil	MaryAnn Simmons

Clerk of Session: Donna Erickson

2025 BOARD OF DEACONS

Class of 2025	Class of 2026	Class of 2027
Ellen Bergman	Jackie Hammel	Dennis Huff
Patricia Butts	Kathy Maier	Jose Irby
Carol Miller	Lorinda Ravo	Jean Zetterberg

Moderator: Ellen Bergman

2025 HEAVEN SENT NURSERY SCHOOL

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

OFFICE: 852-2006

Director: Jen Bujno

Pat Butts	- 2026	Pam Venturini	- 2027
Meghan DeCree	- HS Parent	Toni Fryer	- HS Parent
Sharon Heil - Session Rep			
Rev. Erin Hayes-Cook - Ex-Officio			

A NOTE FROM OUR EDITOR

Happy October, FPCH.

This month promises to be filled with many surprises. Our calendar is full with many activities. First, we have opportunities for food and fellowship through our gourmet groups: PLEFF, women's and men's breakfasts, and Ladies Who Lunch. Next, we have wonderful music planned for our weekly worship services and we have a fun filled Second Sunday with a magician. Our Sunday School teachers have great lessons planned for our children and our Deacons and Elders will meet during their regularly scheduled meetings on the second and third Tuesday of the month.

Be sure to contribute to our clothing drive this month, October 4th, either by cleaning out your closets or assisting with the loading of the truck on that morning if you are able.

Please take note of the "Thank You" section of our newsletter as many people have revealed heartfelt gratitude to many of you. Also take a look at the bios of our new members of the church. Say hello upon your entrance to or departure from church to make them feel welcome.

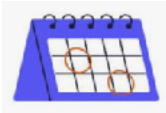
Finally, please take time to review Pastor Erin's article about our good friend Al Ravo who has decided to retire from his position as church treasurer after 15 years of continued service to FPCH. He has demonstrated a true love of service to our church and we will miss his diligence in providing us with updates on the health of our finances. We know his shoes may be difficult to fill, but we have every confidence that whoever takes on this new role will have Al's support and assistance until he or she feels comfortable in the position.

As always, thank you for your readership. If you have suggestions for stories for future editions, please email me or see me after service one Sunday. Until next month... Yours in Christ,

MaryAnn Simmons

DATES TO REMEMBER - OCTOBER 2025

- 01: Yarn Girls - 1 PM in the Conference Room
- 02: Music Rehearsal - FPCH Ringers at 6:30 PM and Senior Choir at 7:30 PM, both in the Music Room
- 05: Confirmation Class - 9:00 - 9:50 AM in the Conference Room
- 05: Worship and communion - 10 AM; livestream through Facebook; Sunday School; Joyful Noise/Unity Chimes Rehearsal after worship
- 07: PLEFF Dinner - 6 PM at The Riverside Diner, (the old Belvidere Diner), Belvidere, NJ
- 09: Music Rehearsal - FPCH Ringers at 6:30 PM and Senior Choir at 7:30 PM, both in the Music Room
- 11: Men's Breakfast - 8:15 AM - at the Chapel
- 12: Confirmation Class - 9:00 - 9:50 AM in the Conference Room
- 12: Worship - 10 AM; livestream through Facebook; Sunday School; Joyful Noise/Unity Chimes Rehearsal after worship
- 12: Second Sunday - 11:30 at the Chapel -BRING YOUR OWN LUNCH
- 14: Deacon's Meeting - 6:30 PM in the Conference Room
- 16: Music Rehearsal - FPCH Ringers at 6:30 PM and Senior Choir at 7:30 PM, both in the Music Room
- 18: Ladies' Breakfast - 9 AM - River Star Diner
- 19: Confirmation Class - 9:00 - 9:50 AM in the Conference Room
- 19: Worship - 10 AM; livestream through Facebook; Sunday School; Joyful Noise/Unity Chimes Rehearsal after worship
- 21: Session Meeting - 6:30 PM, in the Conference Room
- 28: Ladies who Lunch - Panther Valley Pub, Allamuchy at noon
- 23: Music Rehearsal - FPCH Ringers at 6:30 PM and Senior Choir at 7:30 PM, both in the Music Room
- 25: Building and Grounds Fall Clean up 9 AM-noon
- 26: Worship - 10 AM; livestream through Facebook; Sunday School; Joyful Noise/Unity Chimes Rehearsal after worship
- 30: Music Rehearsal - FPCH Ringers at 6:30 PM and Senior Choir at 7:30 PM, both in the Music Room
- 31: Happy Halloween!



A NOTE FROM OUR PASTOR

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ.

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
3 a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build,
4 a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,
5 a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,
6 a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away,
7 a time to tear and a time to mend,
a time to be silent and a time to speak,
8 a time to love and a time to hate,
a time for war and a time for peace.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

As the weather begins to change and the sunlight begins to dim, our bodies and spirits notice. We were made to notice the changes around us and marvel in the beauty of God's good creation. But what if the change of the season has something to teach us about the seasons of our life? The book of Ecclesiastes so wonderfully illustrates the beautiful cycles of life and our world. And many of these words come to us as harsh reminders of things we would rather avoid, like kill and hate. Perhaps though in the poetry of these words we might find something more significant, a balance of opposites. What if the writer simply wants us to pay attention to the seasons of our lives and ask where God might be at work? I believe we find ourselves in a time of building and gathering stones. I believe God is at work in us to build the community that God dreams about for us and for the world. I encourage you over this next month to take the time to observe in your walk with God what season you are in and how to invite God to be with you through it. I know that you will learn. You will grow and I can't wait to hear about it.

Pastor Erin

“SHOW ME YOUR WAYS, LORD, TEACH ME YOUR PATHS” - PSALM 25:4

BY: LORINDA RAVO

This year, our Sunday School students will be following the paths that come from our Bibles. We're learning songs based on Bible verses, and each month, having a Bible memory verse as well. In September, we learned about the book of Numbers, and the text from Numbers 6: 24 "The Lord bless you and keep you, and give you peace". We coordinated our monthly Bible memory verse in our classrooms. This month, our song is based on Ephesians 5: 20: "Praise God". Our monthly class memory verse is from Deuteronomy 31:6 "Be strong and courageous."

Finally, each month we are delighted to share with you the often insightful and always interesting answers to questions or prompts that we give to our students. In September, we asked the kids to complete the prompt: "It's Okay to....". Their answers were recorded on apple cut-outs and displayed in the hallway by the ramp entrance to church. In October, we'll be look for answers to the question: "What is your favorite thing about Fall?"

OUR CONFIRMATION CLASS THANKS YOU

This Fall members of the confirmation class held a mum fundraising sale to defer the cost of their retreat at Camp Johnsonburg in December. To that end, they sold 110 mums and therefore netted enough money to allow each girl to attend the camp at half the cost. They wish to extend a sincere thank you to the congregation members who supported them in their efforts. Special thanks are extended to their teacher, Jan Courtright, to Lorinda Ravo for coming up with the idea, to Best's Fruit Farm who provided the beautiful mums, to John Mark Wojcicki, to Pattie Huff for creating the vouchers and tallying our orders, to Pastor Erin, and to MaryAnn Simmons. Well done, ladies!



SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

This month, I have decided to highlight some news from our PreK-1st grade class. Emily Tischler and Gwenn Bartku have graciously included their activities from the month of September.

We've had such a great start to Sunday school in our Pre-K through 1st grade class!

So far, the children have learned about the Creation story, the story of Abraham and Sarah, and most recently on 9/21 the story of Joseph and his colorful dream coat.

The kids were full of excitement as they walked in to find brightly colored scarves scattered across the floor! We played games that brought the story to life, moving to different colors to celebrate Joseph's coat of many colors.

Together, we read the Bible story and shared ideas about what Joseph's coat might have looked like and why his brothers felt jealous. Then each child created their own "dream coat" cape, decorating it with crosses, stars, hearts, and other symbols of God's love (like cats and unicorns!)



We ended by having the children wear their finished capes as a reminder that God has a special plan for each of us.

A special thank you to Harper and Veronica from the confirmation class, who joined us and were such a big help with the kids!

We're so grateful for the opportunity to learn and grow in faith with your wonderful children.

With Joy,
Emily and Gwenn

G.R.O.W. TEAM NEWS

BY: BILL CORS

This month, we wish to highlight information regarding our Little Pantry and the Clothing Drive.

Did You Know...?

Our church has a food pantry!

Our pay it forward little pantry is located on the front porch of our chapel at 291 Main Street in Hackettstown. The concept is simple: take what you need, leave what you can. The pantry is open 24 hours a day and is open to all!

Consider donating to the pantry today!
Contact a member of the deacons for more information



Did You Know...?

The Deacons hold a clothing drive twice a year!

Our next clothing drive will be held on **Saturday, October 4th** in the church parking lot. Clothes can be dropped off on Tuesday, September 30th from 5:30pm – 7:00pm. Blankets, quilts, or comforters are no longer being accepted.

Consider donating or volunteering today!
Visit FPHackettstown.org for more information.



If you have any questions or if you have any ideas, contact Bill Cors or any member of his G.R.O.W. Team Committee.

NEWS FROM THE DEACONS

By PAT BUTTS

As a last minute reminder, our clothing drive pickup is Saturday, October 4th with the truck arriving by 9AM. We thank you all for supporting this project which contributes to our compassionate ministry.

We continue stocking our Little Pantry through donations and appreciate the support of the church and community. Our volunteers help stock and rotate food which is available 24/7 for those who are food insecure.

We would like to congratulate Kayle Larga for all his work on our Prayer Garden. His Eagle Scout Project made such a difference to this beautiful space and the Deacons were honored to contribute to this project.

If you have any suggestions for the Deacons and their ministries, or you would like to assist in any way, contact Ellen Bergman, moderator.

WE NEED VIDEOGRAPHERS

The worship committee would like to solicit your help on alternating Sundays as a videographer for our worship services.

If you have a talent for capturing events on video, then this is the job for you. We are currently in need of people who are willing to take on this role. We will teach you how to work the equipment. Then, give us one or two Sundays a month so our homebound members can watch our services each week.

See Geof Gohlich or Pastor Erin for details.



AUGUST 2025 FINANCIAL \$NAPSHOT

BY: AL RAVO

The Expenses Paid and Income amounts below do not include the funds transferred from the Endowment to meet the church operating expenses.

	JULY	Year to Date
Income	\$11,667.10	\$144,265.28
Expenses Paid	\$21,338.72	\$170,616.14
Net Operating Income /(Deficit)	(\$ 9,671.62)	(\$26,350.86)
Amount of Schwab/Edward Jones funds used to pay operating expenses	\$ 0.00	\$ 6,000.00
Amount Needed from Endowment	\$ 0.00	\$ 29,000.00
Total amount of Endowment, Schwab & Edward Jones funds used to pay Operating expenses in 2025	\$ 0.00	\$ 35,000.00

Financial Comments / Observations:

1. The five largest operating expenses in August were:

• 1.) \$7,668.62 – Pastoral expenses (payroll, Board of Pensions, etc.).

• 2.) \$5,810.25 – Insurance (quarterly bill).

• 3.) \$3,815.20 – Staff payroll & payroll processing expenses.

• 4.) \$800.00 – Cleaning (Church & Chapel).

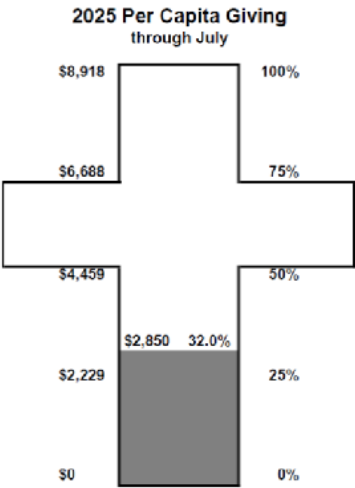
• 5.) \$686.72 – Electricity (Church, Chapel & Manse).
- 2.The operating net income / (deficits) were (\$9,671.62) in August and (\$26,350.86) Year To Date.

•The actual August operating expenses were (\$1,005.39) above the average monthly budgeted expenses.

•The actual August operating incomes were (\$4,999.57) below the average monthly budgeted incomes.

•The Year-To-Date operating expenses were (\$7,949.47) above the average YTD budgeted amounts.

•The Year-To-Date operating incomes were \$10,931.95 above the average YTD budgeted amount.



AUGUST 2025 FINANCIAL \$NAPSHOT

CONTINUED FROM JULY 2025 FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

3. In August, the value of the MassMutual Investment accounts increased \$6,472.95 to \$361,609.10.

4. In August, the value of the entire Endowment Fund increased \$6,610.96 to \$368,502.87.

5. The August Second Saturday Free Community Dinner was not held. The total cost to the church of all community dinners since September 2021 remains at \$693.02.

6. The August Men’s breakfast was not held because it is suspended in the summer.

The 2025 Per Capita is \$43.50 for each of the 205 members of our Church. (The number is the membership of FPCH on December 31, 2023.) The total amount due in 2025 is \$8,917.50 or \$743.13 monthly. In August, \$0.00 was received for Per Capita leaving the total received in 2025 at \$2,849.62 or 32.0% of the amount due. No payment was sent to the Presbytery of the Highlands of NJ in August leaving the total sent in 2025 at \$2,849.62 or 32.0% of the total amount due.

BUILDING ON GENEROSITY (BOG) CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

- Donations received during August, \$40.00.

• Total donations received from church members, non-members and anonymous from September 2019 (the BOG Kickoff dinner) through the last day of August 2025, \$651,941.02.

• Expenses paid using the BOG funds in August, \$2,000.00. This expense was paid to Schichtel Restorations, the final payment to restore and replace the two center front doors of the Church.

• The total available BOG funds are \$4,234.28. The breakdown is \$1,484.28 for the next BOG project with an additional \$2,750.00 designated for the Chapel range hood replacement.

• Donations breakdown by source:

○ 5.4% - \$35,048.76 from nonmembers

○ 86.0% - \$560,567.05 from members

○ 8.6% - \$56,325.21 from anonymous & dinners

○ 100.0% - \$651,941.02 Total

Contact Al Ravo if you have any questions or would like to discuss the Church’s operating finances, the Endowment Funds, Per Capita or the Building On Generosity Capital Campaign.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM SEPTEMBER

During the September, we witnessed the start of Sunday School, the blessing of the backpacks, the renewal of music with our choirs and chimes groups. Below are snapshots from those events. Photos courtesy of MaryAnn Simmons.



NEW MEMBERS JOIN FPCH

The last Sunday in September was a glorious introduction to seven new members of our congregation.

Daniel Hall - was baptized at the Malibu Presbyterian Church. He recently graduated from college and is looking for full time work in his field, Graphic Design. He currently works at The House of the Good Shepherd in the Dining Services. He has helped in church as an usher, greeter, and with the offering. He may be quiet but he has a big Love for Christ.

Patty Hall - was baptized at St. Benedict Joseph RC Church. She had her First Holy Communion and Confirmation at Our Lady of Lourdes RC Church in Massapequa Park, where she grew up. She works at the Willow Grove School. She was a Deacon at the Malibu Presbyterian Church and was the moderator of the Deacons for 2 years.

Tim Hall - was baptized at Immanuel Presbyterian Church, the same church his father was ordained. He grew up in California and was a Deacon at the Shadow Hills Presbyterian. He and Patty moved back to the east coast 10 years ago. He works for Broden Design Group in Denville.



Jessica Sonners - is married to Dan and is the the mom of twin daughters, Harper & Emma, who were baptized today, and has lived in Hackettstown for the past 12 years.

Dan Sonners - is married to Jessica and is the the dad of twin daughters, Harper & Emma, who were baptized today, and has lived in Hackettstown for the past 12 years.

Elise Bates Russell - is blessed to have grown up in the Presbyterian Church and grateful to be part of the community here at FPCH. She serves as the executive director of Johnsonburg Camp and Retreat Center, and also serves as the architectural consultant of Run River, helping outdoor ministries with strategic planning and campus plans. She enjoys time with my family, traveling, hearing new ideas, being outdoors and meeting people!

Sophie Russell - is the daughter of Elise Bates Russell and is a senior at Hackettstown High School. She enjoys baking, trying new things, and spending time with friends and family.

Welcome, all. We are glad you have found your new church home.

DID YOU KNOW...

Here are a few fun facts about the Presbyterian church:

... The Presbyterian Church is over 450 years old, originating during the 16th-century Protestant Reformation with the influence of John Calvin and its establishment in Scotland by John Knox in the 1560s.

... The name Presbyterian comes from the Greek word “pres-buteros” meaning “elder,” reflecting the church’s elder-led government structure.

... Fred Rogers, the creator of Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood, was an ordained Presbyterian minister.

... Presbyterians recognize only two sacraments: baptism and the Eucharist (communion).

SAVE THE DATE: CLOTHING DRIVE IS OCTOBER 4TH

This Fall, our clothing drive will be held on Saturday, October 4th. Therefore, if you are in need of cleaning out those closets to make room for your new Fall and Winter wardrobes, be sure to start the process now.

The Deacons appreciate any donations you can provide for this worthy cause. We are looking for all clothing, including sweaters, tops, pants, skirts, socks, and coats that can be worn by those less fortunate. In addition, we will accept accessories such as belts, hats, scarves, neckties, handbags. We will also take toys and stuffed animals, and shoes must be in their own bags. Please note the company no longer accepts comforters, blankets, or quilts.

As always, thank you for your generosity in supporting this event. All money received for this activity will go toward the Deacons’ missions. If you have any questions, contact Ellen Bergman.

MUSIC NOTES

BY: LORINDA RAVO

In October, our music during the service will be:

- OCT 5:** We Come to Your Table- Sr. Choir
Whole World in His Hands: Joyful Noise Bells
- OCT 12:** The Church’s One Foundation-FPCH Ringers
- OCT 19:** The Prayer-Senior Choir
- OCT 26:** Jacob’s Ladder-Unity Chime Choir
Praise God-Little Lights Sunday School Choir



IT’S NOT TOO LATE TO JOIN

If you’ve been thinking about being a part of any of our music ensembles here at FPCH - Senior Choir, FPCH Ringers (adult chimes), Joyful Noise Bells (for young ringers) or Unity Chimes (for kids grade 3 and up) - please be sure to speak with Lorinda for more information.

People are welcome to come in and give it a try at any time throughout the year.

Sharing God's Bounty

Fearing God

As stewards, we are managers, caretakers, and trustees of all that God entrusts to us. Through grace, we respond to God's love and care. We live our lives and return our gifts out of gratitude and thanksgiving for who he is and what he does for us. However, if we do not include a fear of the Lord in our thinking as well as an acceptance of his grace and love, our understanding of God is incomplete. The fear of the Lord results from a recognition of our sinfulness and the separation from a just and holy God that sin causes. As our judge, God holds us accountable. He cannot and will not tolerate our sin. Because of original sin, we, by ourselves, are incapable of pleasing God. Out of his love, God sent his Son, who had no sin, to the Cross for our sins. *"In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding"* (Ephesians 1:7-8).

In 2 Corinthians 5:9-11, Paul refers to our need to fear the Lord. *"So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for things done while in the body, whether good or bad. Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men."* This passage does not refer to justification because, through faith in Christ, we are justified forever. What it does refer to is the question, "What have you done with your life through faith?" We are responsible for our actions. We will *"appear before the judgment seat of Christ"* to answer for what we did as his stewards. We can't avoid our accountability.

In Proverbs 9:10, we are told what is meant by *"fear of the Lord."* *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."* As children of God, we revere him and submit to him. He is the exalted King. *"For I am a great King," says the Lord almighty, 'and my name is to be feared among the nations' "* (Malachi 1:14b). We are blessed because, not only do we stand in awe of our great King, but we also rejoice in him. *"Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling"* (Psalm 2:11).

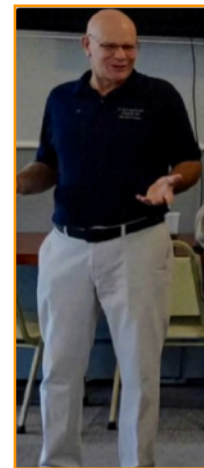
Through the fear of God, we see ourselves as we are ... small and sinful. Fear helps us see our need for God's mercy and grace. We submit to God because we understand our state of helplessness. The fear of the Lord is indeed the beginning of wisdom.

Give your heart to Christ, and let him direct your giving. In order for you to be what you should as a church member, you must first define and confirm your stewardship obligations and commitments between yourself and the Christ who gave his all for you. Stewardship of time, talent and possessions is the very heart of Christian discipleship and our way of expressing our love in response to God's amazing grace.

AL RAVO, TREASURER OF FPCH, TO RETIRE IN DECEMBER

BY: PASTOR ERIN HAYES-COOK

For the past 15 years Al Ravo has not just served as treasurer but helped be the heartbeat of our connection to our church and our resources. Over many hours, meetings, emails, phone calls and laughs, he has faithfully offered his hands and mind to the service of God here at First Presbyterian Hackettstown. He has continued to develop systems of transparency and ease when it comes to understanding our finances. Always just a phone call away, Al helped lead us to where we are now: a healthier, more transparent, and established church.



At the end of this year Al Ravo will retire as treasurer, which is truly his second retirement. He took on this role after retiring from his career with M & M Mars. We know that there is a time and a season for everything under heaven. We are blessed and grateful to have had Al Ravo as our treasurer for this season of our church, and we are looking forward to seeing what this next season of life will be for him; hopefully it includes lots of golf and all the people and things he loves.



Thank you, Al, for your loving service to this little part of God's kingdom here on earth. Your dedication, service, and devotion to our congregation and its well-being will always be treasured. We pray you will be blessed more and more each day. We will celebrate you soon. We know that God has richly blessed us with Al Ravo and God will continue to bless him.

If you or someone you know is interested in stepping into the role of church treasurer, please inform Sharon Heil who is the lead of the personnel committee, and she would be happy to share the information with you. (Photos courtesy of Lorinda Ravo)

SEPTEMBER SECOND SUNDAY

Second Sunday in September was quite memorable. Members of the Hackettstown First Aid and Rescue Squad came to FPCH to teach us about First Aid and show us the equipment they use, including one of their ambulances. The kids enjoyed the members who taught them and even brought their favorite “stuffies” who served as patients during the lesson.

Thank you to our First Aid and Rescue Squad for sharing your gift of health welfare. Photos courtesy of Lorinda Ravo.



OCTOBER SECOND SUNDAY: IT'S A FAMILY EVENT!

We have a fun change for our **October 12** Second Sunday. It's a **FAMILY** event in the Chapel this month! We'll welcome kids of ALL ages as well as all interested adults for a program presented by show magician Jungle Dave. We invite you to check out his website at junglemagicshow.com (Please note: kids in kindergarten and younger must have an adult stay with them.)

This month, we're asking all to **provide their own lunch**-we'll provide juice pouches and water. Lunch will be from 11:30-12:00 and then the program will begin at 12:15. To help us in our planning, we request that you preregister for this FREE program by signing up on the information table in front of the church, and let us know if you'll be joining us for lunch or coming in at noon!

We want to thank the deacons for helping with the funding for this program. Questions? See Lorinda.

THANK YOU FROM OUR MEMBERS

A few of our congregation members wish to extend a sincere “Thank You” for your well-wishes, phone calls, prayers and cards during their time of need. I would also like to take the time to recognize some of our members who contribute frequently to the needs of the church.

- A special thank you comes from **Nellie Creager** as she grieved the loss of her sister.
- A special note of thanks comes from **Deb Gulick-Shepherd** as she was recovering from surgery.
- A special note of thanks is sent to our **Board of Deacons** at FPCH for their financial support of our October Second Sunday program, which will feature Jungle Dave, a professional magician.
- A heartfelt thank you to **Ellen Bergman and Donna Erickson** for their efforts with the kitchen training that will insure all safety protocols are met during our Chapel kitchen use and community dinners and fundraisers.
- Thank you to our **congregation members** who dropped off items for our clothing drive. Your generosity is always appreciated.

OCTOBER GREETERS

OCT 5: Pam Venturini and Kathy Slater

OCT 12: Pat and Dennis Huff

OCT 19: Kathy Maier and Bev Saunders

OCT 26: Jean Zetterberg and Maddox Fucetola

† GREETER

TEACH YOUR CHILDREN HOW TO PRAY

A Prayer for Social Justice

This month, as we provide a special offering for Peace and Global Witness on October 5th, I ask that you encourage your children to reach out to others who are marginalized in society for whatever reason. Ask your children to pay attention to others in school who may not be treated kindly by others. Perhaps they can ask the student to sit with them at lunch time or to play on the playground during recess. Maybe they can invite the child over for a play date at your home. NOTE: If your children are older, adjust the activity accordingly. Maybe you can suggest they provide a donation to our Little Pantry located in front of the Chapel or they can participate in community service, advocate for policy change by contacting elected officials, or they can support minority-owned businesses. They can also engage in creative and educational activities like organizing community murals, participating in spoken word poetry, or having discussions based on stories and books.

Partaking in these activities will help your children to learn about the four pillars of social justice: human rights, access, participation, and equity. Without these four principles, social justice cannot be achieved.

Jesus taught and demonstrated that social justice is a central theme of his message, particularly through his proclamation in Luke 4:18-19 to "bring good news to the poor," "release to the captives," and to "let the oppressed go free." His teachings, including the Great Commandments to "Love your neighbor" and the Beatitudes, which emphasize caring for the marginalized and vulnerable, linking spiritual and social well-being. His actions and words challenge societal norms by prioritizing the needs of the poor, the ill, and the oppressed.

I hope you can encourage your children to start their day off with this small prayer: "O God, the King of righteousness, lead us in the ways of justice and peace. Inspire us to break down all tyranny and oppression, and grant that every person may receive what is rightfully due to them. May we all care for one another. Amen."

Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with some suggestions for ways to encourage prayer in the lives of your children.

Next month, I will provide you with another idea from Traci Smith's book *Faithful Families: Creating Sacred Moments at Home* as I have been over the past months.

GET READY FOR FALL CLEANUP

The building and grounds are in need of some sprucing up this month so we encourage everyone to mark their calendars to assist in the annual Fall Work Day cleanup session which will take place on Saturday, October 25th from 9 AM to noon.

Please bring your gifts for raking, flower bed clean up, etc. We will be outside preparing our building and grounds for the winter months. Tools/supplies will be provided, but if you wish to bring your own, please feel free to do so. Many hands make light work, so your help would be greatly appreciated! FPCH members of all ages are welcome. Any questions, see Diane Hull.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO CREATE MONTHLY BULLETIN BOARDS

BY: LORINDA RAVO

Do you enjoy creating displays? Then we have a job for you! Three bulletin boards can be seen in the church: one in the narthex, one at the top of the ramp entrance to the sanctuary, and one opposite the conference room (currently displaying clever cartoons). These need to be changed each month, and we would love to welcome the creative talents of anyone who would like to take on the fun of making eye-catching and engaging displays.

We welcome individuals or a team of people who can work together. You can use a thematic approach, or a monthly scheme based on a holiday that matches the time of year or the church calendar, or you can put together a display of what is happening in our congregation. We will leave it totally up to you. Whatever you choose, we are sure it will entice the congregation.

Please see Lorinda if you are interested in taking on any or all 3 bulletin boards.

PEACE AND GLOBAL WITNESS OFFERING TO BE HELD ON WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY OCT 5TH

BY: MARYANN SIMMONS

The **Peace & Global Witness Offering** enables the church to promote the Peace of Christ by addressing systems of conflict and injustice across the world. Through the Peace & Global Witness Offering, congregations are encouraged and equipped to find and address the anxiety and discord that is prevalent throughout this broken and sinful world.

This offering is an annual event of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) that supports peacemaking and reconciliation efforts at the local, regional, and international levels. Funds from the offering are distributed with **25%** retained by local congregations, **25%** used by mid-councils (presbyteries/synods), and **50%** sent to the Presbyterian Mission Agency for national and global initiatives to address conflict and injustice. The offering emphasizes the church's role in promoting Christ's peace by addressing systems of injustice and fostering reconciliation

What it Funds:

- **Education:** Provides education for those involved in peacemaking.
- **Advocacy:** Supports advocacy for peace and justice in cultures of violence.
- **Reconciliation:** Funds efforts to reconcile people and systems fractured by conflict.
- **Witness:** Encourages congregations to actively witness to God's gift of peace in their communities and the world.

Won't you join me on Sunday, October 5th, to provide any gift that you can toward this offering? It is an offering that would mean a lot to many people, including those in our own congregation.



OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

- 1: Tim Gelsinger
- 3: Jolene Stark
Randi Venturini
- 6: Larson Jones
- 7: Sara Kshatri
- 10: Chris Bramley III
- 12: Pam Covert
Chris Ratti
- 13: Tracey Gelsinger
Sarah Wojcicki-Rabuano
- 18: Nicholas John Wojcicki
- 19: Rhonda Stone
Sharon Wojcicki
- 21: Deborah Gulick Shepherd
- 22: Heather Dartnell
- 25: Brielle Plumbo
- 28: Vanessa Neice
- 29: Allison DelPlato
- 30: Guy Collina Jr.
- 31: Chris Roguso

WE CELEBRATE YOUR DAY WITH YOU!

OCTOBER ANNIVERSARIES

- 7: Pete & Carol Miller
- 7: Chip & Amy Cochran

PRAYER LIST

Please keep the following in your prayers:

Al Aquino
Centenary University Staff and Students
Eugenie Chetangie
Churches throughout the U.S.
Nellie Creager and family
Shirley DeLoia, sister of Phyllis Prestopine
FPCH and Friends of FPCH
Dan Gardner
Terry Gretchen
Joan Grover
Barbara Hall
Cathy Hayes
Maikuu congregation, Kibwezi Kenya
Members of the Armed Forces
Barbara Pace, niece of the Prestopines
Alice Phoebus
Katy Ratti and family
Jim Simmons
Carol Spitzer
The food insecure
The homeless
Those struggling with addictions and mental health
Those recovering from surgery
Those traveling

